


1961

News and Notes

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1961) "News and Notes," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 40 : No. 2 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol40/iss2/8>

NEWS AND NOTES

The 1962 Annual Meeting

The Florida Historical Society will meet in Jacksonville early in May, 1962, at the invitation of the Jacksonville Historical Society and Jacksonville University. The date has been set to coincide with the presentation of a historical drama commemorating the quadricentennial of the landing of Jean Ribault in 1562 and the establishment of Fort Caroline in 1564. Kermit Hunter, nationally known author and playwright, is writing the drama which will be presented in the new coliseum. The George Washington Hotel has been selected as headquarters for the meeting.

The Junior Historical Writing Contest

"Sarasota and the Florida Boom" by Martin Herskovitz, a student at Sarasota High School, won first prize in this year's contest. Second place went to Jeanne Cline, Seacrest High School at Delray Beach, for her paper titled "Fort Jefferson." "Florida Quits the Union" by Helen Motion, Coral Gables High School, was awarded the third prize.

The society is indebted to the committee of judges from Jacksonville University for reading and judging the unusually large volume of papers entered in the contest. The committee was composed of Professors Alberta Johnson, Ralph Bald, Lawrence Breeze and Vice President Ben F. Rogers, chairman.

The Golden Anniversary of Naval Aviation

"*The Machine Has Worked.* It seems to me worthwhile for this government to try whether it will not work on a large enough scale to be of use in the event of war. For this purpose, I recommend that you appoint two officers. . . . to make recommendations as to its practicability and prepare estimates as to the cost. I think this is well worth doing," wrote Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt in 1898 of an early flying machine.

When Orville and Wilbur Wright captured the imagination of the world with their Kitty Hawk flight in 1903, Naval interest in aviation had been a matter of record for about five years. The Naval Appropriations Act for the year 1912 provided \$25,000 for experimental work in Naval aviation. The actual birthday of Naval aviation is reckoned from May 8, 1911, when the *Triad* seaplane was ordered from Glenn Curtiss at a cost of \$5,000. The original contract called for "one Curtiss eight cylinder biplane or 'Triad' fitted for rising from or lighting on water, including land equipment, water equipment and combination equipment, fitted with engine panels and chassis and four other interchangeable wing panels covered with rubberized linen on top and woven special sail cloth on the bottom."

In January, 1914, a Naval Aeronautic Station was opened at the old Navy yard at Pensacola. Though not the first Naval air station, Pensacola soon attained a position of prime importance.

On June 6 to 11 of this year, Pensacola and other cities in the area joined with the Naval Air Station in celebrating the history of Naval aviation. Pensacola's annual Fiesta of Five Flags took place at the same time. (Excerpted from the illustrated magazine section of the *Pensacola Journal*, June 6, 1961.)

The Florida Anthropological Society

The 13th annual meeting of the group was held at the University of Miami in February. A resume of the program is given in the society's *Newsletter* No. 45, prepared by the president, Colonel William C. Lazarus, 103 South Bay Drive, Fort Walton Beach. Through the society's efforts, state law now provides for a professionally qualified archaeologist (selected by the Director of Conservation and confirmed by the Cabinet) who "could function statewide on salvage archaeology matters with freedom from state politics." The law, effective July 1, 1961, is a part of the legislation which revised the State Department of Conservation. Unfortunately no funds are available at the present time for implementation of the office of state archaeologist.

Excavations completed or in process this summer include Indian sites at Christmas, Margaret, Fort Caroline and Chipley.

An appeal to the Florida Congressional delegation has been

made regarding proper salvage operations at the site of Fort St. Marks and urging restoration of this old Spanish fort.

Fort Gadsden Restoration

The Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials plans restoration of Fort Gadsden, 12 miles upstream from the mouth of the Apalachicola River. Dr. Hale Smith, Florida State University, who is working in Puerto Rico this summer, will be in charge of the restoration in the fall.

The State Historic Marker Program

The Park Board marker program is now in full swing with nearly 80 markers either erected, on hand or on order. The goal is one marker for each county. During the next two years, two dozen additional sites throughout the state will be marked. Financial assistance amounting to approximately \$1,000 has been received from local societies. Additional funds can always be used to expand the program.

The history department at Florida State University has prepared the texts for many of the markers while others have been provided by local groups. Mimeographed copies of all marker texts will be available soon. For information on the program, write Ralph Hager, Chief, Information and Education, Florida Park Service, P. O. Box 3697 MSS, Tallahassee.

A recent marker, erected in June, commemorated the salt works which operated in the St. Andrews Bay area during the Civil War. The marker was placed at Phillips Inlet bridge on US highway 98, West, by the Park Board with the cooperation of the Florida Civil War Centennial Commission.

The Registry of National Historic Landmarks

In the last two issues of the *Quarterly* will be found summary data on the landmarks program of the National Park Service. In July, announcement was made of an additional site to be marked in Florida: "Okeechobee Battlefield: On the northern shore of Lake Okeechobee, on Christmas Day, 1837, Zachary Taylor won a decisive victory over a band of Seminole and

Mikasuki warriors. The battle was a turning point in the Second Seminole War. The battlefield location is well established. A monument, erected in 1939 by descendants of Colonel Gentry (killed in the battle) and the Florida Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, stands at the southwestern edge of the field. The site, located 4 miles southeast of Okeechobee on US highway 441, is privately owned."

Society for the History of Discoveries

This is a new historical society. It grew out of the International Congress for the History of Discoveries held in Lisbon, September, 1960. A small group of historians from the United States attending the Congress agreed that the history of discoveries is as yet largely a neglected field in this country, despite some outstanding individual contributions, and that an organized effort might help to promote a more intensive contribution by American scholars to the well developed international scholarship in this field. Accordingly, the Society for the History of Discoveries was formed in December in New York at the meeting of the American Historical Association.

The purpose of the new society is indicated by its name; however its scope will encompass the whole range of activities leading up to the discoveries, as well as their consequences and more remote implications. Such allied fields as cartography, economic expansion, geographic thought and beginning of colonialism will be included.

All persons interested in supporting these aims are invited to join the group. No dues have been set. Details are available from the secretary, John Parker, University of Minnesota Library, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. The next meeting is planned for December, 1961, in conjunction with the American Historical Association meeting. For information on papers to be presented, write Thomas E. Goldstein, 10 East 85th Street, New York 28, New York, the society's president.

The Civil War Round Table of Jacksonville

This group was organized in February and now numbers some twenty members. Regular meetings are held on the second Wed-

nesday of each month, September through May, at Jacksonville University, and at special times during the summer months. Thomas K. Potter, Jr., is the Round Table's president. Serving with him are David Reichert, vice president; Richard Pastorett, secretary-treasurer; and Robert Bragg, assistant secretary-treasurer.

News of Local Historical Societies and Commissions

At the annual meeting of the Florida Historical Society in Palm Beach, reports from local historical groups were made by members present at the luncheon. Written reports from a number of other groups were on hand but time did not permit the reading of them all. There follows a summary of these reports, combined with items received since that time. In addition, brief reports were heard from the St. Lucie County Historical Society, the Alachua County Historical Commission, the Sarasota Historical Society, and the Polk County Historical Society. More details on these named groups will appear in another issue of the *Quarterly*.

Palm Beach Historical Society

Tape recording of reminiscences of local residents is a new project of this society, made possible by a gift from Paul Maddock, a society member and a new director of the state society. The group's historical collection, housed in the Flagler Museum, continues to grow. Recent acquisitions include autographed photographs of prominent people; the voluminous archives of the late Ruby Edna Pierce, for 50 years editor of the *Palm Beach Daily News*; and a packet of letters written from the Palm Beach area in 1881. The letters were made available by Mrs. D. F. Dunkle. Among them are letters written by Ed Brelsford (later postmaster) to his mother in Ohio. A quotation illustrates their interest and value: "We are now sitting in Cap's house [Captain Dimick], a cool breeze blowing off the ocean and a large bunch of bananas lying on the floor between us. We are living with Cap, his wife has gone north and he has a fine place. We have seen the mule and he has a crooked tail. We like the lake better than any place we have seen. There are ten families here, and about 8 or 10 bachelors. . . . We are going to watch the Ocean

beach nights for bear. The turtles begin to lay now and the bears walk the beach for eggs."

The society's *Newsletter* for May listed a more spectacular gift: "Certain equipment similar to that used in Bradley's casino years ago, and some items actually used there, so that we will be able to display, as a page from Palm Beach's past, a 'Corner in Bradley's' . . . under glass!"

Historical Association of Southern Florida

At the April meeting, officers for 1961-62 elected were Wayne E. Withers, president; Charlton W. Tebeau, first vice president and editor of *Tequesta*; Roland A. Saye, Jr., second vice president; Justin P. Havee, executive secretary; Mrs. Virginia Wilson, secretary; J. Floyd Monk, treasurer; and Mrs. Andrew J. Moulds, librarian.

A complete bound set of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* was presented to the association by Mrs. Raymond E. Crane. Gifts toward the museum building fund have also been received.

Author and Civil War authority, Bruce Catton, spoke on "Robert E. Lee and the Civil War Centennial" before association members and friends totaling some thousand in February. In March, a panel discussion on Florida in 1861, conducted by Drs. Rembert W. Patrick and Charlton W. Tebeau, proved so popular that other panels have been planned. Dr. Fred Sleight, director, Central Florida Museum, Orlando, gave an illustrated talk on archaeological activities in Virgin Island National Park.

Osceola County Historical Society

This society was organized on October 29, 1949, and re-organized in April 1959. At the annual meeting in May, 1960, officers elected were Mrs. Alma Hetherington, president; Mrs. Sally Knight, first vice president; Kenneth Duncan, second vice president; Mrs. Clara Meacham, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Lillian Garrison, librarian; and directors, Mrs. Kate Knox, Mrs. Betty Metzger, Clifford Sachoff, and William Padgett. Honorary directors appointed were Charles Hartley and William Dummer.

The main project during the past year has been the collecting and placing in albums of old pictures and manuscripts for filing

in the Kissimmee and St. Cloud libraries. A field trip was made by several members to the home of Albert DeVane in Lake Placid where Billy Bowlegs III was interviewed. One program included stories of pioneers in the St. Cloud, Narcoossee and Runnymede areas, compiled by students in Mrs. Clara Meacham's classes from interviews with the pioneers. A member of the Florida Audubon Society gave a talk on Warden Marvin Chandler's work on the Kissimmee prairie several years ago. Florida on the eve of the Civil War was outlined at one meeting by Charles Hartley.

The January meeting featured a talk by Miss Dena Snodgrass on Florida's story from early conquest to the present time, illustrated by maps showing the effect of the state's strategic geographical position on its history. In March, William D. Yount, history instructor in St. Cloud High School, spoke on the teaching of history. A sketch of the history of Kissimmee churches was given by Rev. Renus Olson at the April meeting.

Pensacola Historical Society

The restoration of Old Christ Church and the adaptation of the edifice to a museum facility is the long-term project of this society. Significant exhibits have been installed and the collection is growing. Society members have expressed their good fortune in having the advice of Julien C. Yonge who has returned to live in Pensacola, his former home.

Officers of the group are A. O. Mortenson, president; T. T. Wentworth, Jr., president emeritus; Miss Adelaide Bell, first vice president; Mrs. Daniel B. Smith, second vice president; Vice Admiral C. P. Mason, third vice president; Allen P. Ames, secretary; Mrs. Wilton Hayes, treasurer; and directors, Dr. W. C. Payne, Sr., Captain James E. Jerauld, Miss Catherine Stewart and Herbert N. Rudeen.

Mount Dora Historical Society

Publication of *The Story of Mount Dora* is an outstanding accomplishment of this society. The officers of the group are W. D. Patton, president; Mrs. Clarence Esley, first vice president;

Mrs. Leon Erlech, second vice president; Mrs. Harold Overhiser, treasurer; and Mrs. Mabel J. Wile, secretary.

Volusia County Historical Commission

Plans are being made for the publication of a monograph to mark Civil War activities in the county, including the bombardment of New Smyrna.

Jacksonville Historical Society

Richard A. Martin, editor of the *Jacksonville Journal*, spoke before the society on the use of old newspaper files in the preparation of historical articles and books and described back files of the city's papers as a "gold mine" for scholars. "Landmarks of the Past" was the subject of a talk by Miss Corinne C. Williams and Russell DeGrove, a partner in the engineering firm, Robert M. Angas and Associates. Early maps and a number of marked sections of "witness trees" were on display. The talk was illustrated with photographs of landmarks, including history-making Ellicott's mound. Original field notes of the surveyor, Colonel Henry Washington, were also on display.

Officers elected in May were Egbert S. Moore, president; Mal Houghton, Jr., first vice president; Mrs. Karl Bardin, second vice president; Mrs. W. E. Mott, corresponding secretary; Miss Martha Lee Segui, recording secretary; Frank L. Harris, treasurer; James C. Craig, historian; and Miss Audrey Broward, archivist. Elected directors were Mrs. James L. Borland, Harold R. Clark, C. Howard Hill, Mrs. Linwood Jeffreys, Mrs. Herbert Lamson, Mrs. James H. Lipscomb, Jr., Phillip S. May, Jr., Mrs. Thomas H. McMillan, H. Plant Osborne, Ben F. Rogers, and Mrs. Herbert Earpe Williams. The past presidents serve as an advisory board.

Martin County Historical Society

To commemorate the Civil War, the society showed films on the lives of General Robert E. Lee and President Abraham Lincoln and on the war in general. In addition, films on Florida today were shown. The House of Refuge museum is preparing an exhibit on boat building in Florida about 1900.

In the Florida History wing of the Elliott museum, a pioneer kitchen and living room have been completed and work on other exhibits is progressing so that the wing can be opened to the public soon. The vehicular wing of the museum is open. Over 40 vehicles, gifts of Harmon P. Elliott, are on display. They depict the evolution of wheeled vehicles from the ox-cart to early model automobiles. A quadricycle, the invention of Mr. Elliott's father in 1885, is featured in the exhibit.

Putnam County Historical Society

State Senator H. S. McKenzie of Palatka was named president of this new society in May. R. E. Fisher was elected vice president and Mrs. Juanita Young, secretary-treasurer.

The society assisted in placing a marker, with the Board of Parks and Historic Memorials, at the site of Rollestown, an English settlement founded in 1767.

Pinellas County Historical Commission

On March 21, the Board of County Commissioners created a historical commission for the county which shall have as its purpose "the preservation of all matters relating to the history of Pinellas County, and of Florida." An annual budget of \$3,000 was provided. The Clerk of the Circuit Court was designated, by laws, as the secretary of the historical commission. The office was given temporary housing until the new court house in Clearwater is built. The group's current mailing address is P. O. Box 209, Clearwater. Ralph D. Reed, the director of the commission's activities, has initiated plans to register all pioneers: those who have lived in the county since 1911, the date the county was organized.

Marion County Historical Commission

The first bulletin of the commission, released in June, is an attractive printed leaflet carrying historical articles and pictures. Mrs. Roy V. Ott is chairman of the group; H. H. Henderson, vice chairman; John F. Nicholson secretary; and Mrs. Eugene G. Peek, chairman of the editorial board assisted by Louis H. Chazal and Hansel Leavengood.

St. Augustine Historical Society

Escribano, the society's newsletter, is a delightful journey into the past as well as a report on the extensive activities of the group. J. Carver Harris is editor and Miss Doris Wiles prepares the historical selections.

Frank G. Slaughter spoke before the society in February on the historical incidents about which he has written a number of his novels. Walter C. Hartridge, President of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, spoke in March on Button Gwinnett. Luis Arana presented the July program, a paper prepared from the Stetson Collection, titled "The Day Governor Cabrera Left Florida."

The Evolution of the Oldest House, a report on an exhaustive attempt to trace the history of a St. Augustine house of Spanish colonial period as revealed in documents and by architectural and archaeological exploration, will be published for the society by Florida State University Press.

On May 21, dedication ceremonies were held at the site of the St. Johns Railway marker and park on the Toco Road. Milton Bacon was master of ceremonies and Greville Bathe made the principal address. The Florida East Coast Railway, the Robinson Improvement Company and the State Road Department joined with the society in this venture.

Hillsborough County Historical Commission

The commission has been unusually active in placing highway markers in the county. In fact, all important sites relating to the Civil War activity have been marked.

Original county records, discarded by officials after micro-filming, are being rescued by the commission and are available to students in the museum. One prized record, a bequest of Honorable D. B. McKay, is the first county record book, dated 1836. It contains data on Seminole War activities and the territorial period.

Recent programs sponsored by the commission include talks by Richard Shepard on General Robert E. Lee and by Dr. Kenneth Scott of the University of Tampa on the relationship between genealogy and history.

Through the efforts of the group's officers, the Confederate Stars and Bars was flown over the city hall on January 10 and the Confederate monument on the court house lawn was decorated. The museum in the court house displayed Union and Confederate memorabilia.

The group is to be congratulated on preparing for Governor Farris Bryant, the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION

State of Florida
Executive Department
Tallahassee

WHEREAS, one hundred years ago this Tuesday, "the people of the State of Florida in Convention assembled (did) solemnly ordain, publish and declare, that the State of Florida hereby withdraws herself from the Confederacy of States existing under the name of the United States of America. . . . and is hereby declared a sovereign and independent Nation," and

WHEREAS, no date in the long and colorful history of this state ever presaged more portentous times than did January 10, 1861, when following that historic vote taken in the Hall of the House of Representatives of the Capitol building, at Tallahassee, Florida, periling all, joined her sisters of the South and cast her lot and fortune with the destiny of the Confederate States of America, and

WHEREAS, in the following four long years of war her every resource in manpower, industry and agriculture was channeled toward victory and vindication of the Cause for which she fought, and

WHEREAS, at its close she accepted the decision as the will of Providence, and in returning to the Union that devotion which characterized her service prior to the unfortunate separation has since manifested itself a thousand fold over by defense of Constitution and Flag in four foreign wars; and today in the hour of her greatest prosperity, she finds herself the playground of her American family;

NOW, THEREFORE, to the end that a grateful generation may call to mind the patriotic devotion of their honored sires to

duty and conscience as they saw it and that the deeds of valor of the citizens and soldiers of Florida, in 1861 to 1865, both of the gray and blue persuasion, may be marked, studied and publicly examined, I

Farris Bryant

by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby proclaim the years falling between the dates, January 10, 1961-April 9, 1965, as

Florida Civil War Centennial Years

and recommend to the people of our beloved State that suitable exercises appropriate to the centennial observances of all historic events of Florida's Confederate war years be observed during these Centennial Years.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the capital, this 9th day of January, A. D. 1961.

Farris Bryant, Governor.

Attest: Tom Adams,
Secretary of State.

Membership in the Society

Two recently elected Directors of the Society have been outstanding for their work in adding members to our roll. Mr. Paul Maddock of Palm Beach, one of our hosts at the Annual Meeting, has sent in many memberships. Mr. Thomas O. Brown of Frostproof has been active in his district in interesting people in the Society.